In railway accidents, there are limitations in relief and rescue effort as at best only two cranes can be used at a time (one from each end). The actual time taken depends upon several factors such as severity of accidents, extent of jumbling of coaches, location and terrain involving bridges, formation, embankment etc., soil and lading, weather conditions, accessibility by cranes etc.

(d) In order to further improve the response time, Ministry of Railways had set up a High Level Committee on Disaster Management, whose report has been accepted by the Government. Various recommendations of the committee are under implementation on Zonal Railways. The time taken for implementing various recommendations ranges from three months to three years.

Separate tracks for ordinary and superfast trains

†3287. SHRIMATI CHANDRAKALA PANDEY:
SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are contemplating to implement an effective scheme for laying separate tracks for ordinary and superfast trains;

(b) if so, by when; and

(c) if not, how long the Railways would continue to subject the rail passengers to untimely death?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) There is a continuous improvement in safety performance of Indian Railways. The safety index of accident per million train kms. has reached 0.44 (provisional) in 2002-03, which is the lowest in the history of the Indian Railways.

Insurance scheme for passengers

3288. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to introduce railway passengers insurance scheme by charging nominal premium so as to assure their life and baggage; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA) : (a) Rail Passenger Insurance Scheme has been in operation since 1.8.1994 and insures bonafide passengers against their death or injury in train accidents or untoward incidents as defined under Sections 124 and 124-A of the Railways Act 1989. The loss, damage etc. of luggage in train accidents/untoward incidents is not covered under the scheme. However, compensation for loss, damage etc. of booked luggage is paid by the Railways.

(b) The salient features of the Railway Passengers Insurance Scheme are as under :—

1. Under this scheme, the Railways are reimbursed for compensation paid for loss of life or injuries to bonafide passengers who become victims of rail accident or untoward incidents such as terrorist acts, violent attack, robbery, dacoity, rioting, shoot-out or arson by any person in or on any train carrying passengers, or in a waiting hall, cloak room or reservation or booking office or on any platform or in any place within the precincts of a Railway station or the accidental falling of any passenger from a train carrying passengers.

2. The scale of compensation available under this scheme is provided in the Railway Accidents and untoward incidents (Compensation) Amendment Rules, 1997. Under these rules, the compensation in case of death is Rs. 4 lakhs, and in case of injuries the minimum compensation is Rs. 32000/- and the maximum is Rs. 4,00,000/-

3. No compensation will, however, be payable in cases of suicide or attempted suicide, self-inflicted injury, his own criminal act, or any act committed in a state of intoxication or insanity or natural death or disease, or medical or surgical treatment unless such treatment becomes necessary due to injury caused by the said 'untoward incident'

4. The application for compensation is adjudicated by Railway Claims Tribunal. Twenty one Benches of this tribunal have been set up in different parts of the country. The decrees of the Railway Claims Tribunal are satisfied by the Zonal Railways after following the normal procedure.